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ABSTRACT

An overview of the goals, common problems, and ideal characteristics of multiethnic education is presented. Section one discusses multiethnic education as being important for all children of all backgrounds. Students should have cultural and ethnic alternatives. They need skills, attitudes, and knowledge to function within their own ethnic culture, the mainstream culture, and within and across other ethnic cultures. Common problems of hurriedly-developed multiethnic programs are reviewed in section two. Token courses and faculty members representing ethnic groups do not adequately provide a multiethnic learning environment. Focus on minority group heroes and holidays does more to isolate the image of that group than it does to blend it into the melting pot concept. Teachers who strive to treat all students equally may do damage by overlooking special needs of certain ethnic group children. The ideal multiethnic school should have a well-balanced curriculum in all subject areas; should have a multiethnic faculty; should have equal academic expectations of all students; should allow native languages to be spoken as well as English; and should employ multiethnic testing methods. (Author/AV)

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Fastback 87

Multiethnic Education: Practices and Promises

James Banks

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Multiethnic Education: Practices and Promises

By James A. Banks

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The Goals of Multiethnic Education

Multiethnic education is a reform movement designed to make some major changes in the education of children and youths. Advocates of multiethnic education believe that many school practices related to race and ethnicity are harmful to students and reinforce many of the ethnic stereotypes and discriminatory practices in American society.

Multiethnic education assumes that ethnicity is a salient part of American life and culture. It also assumes that ethnic diversity enriches the nation and increases the ways in which its citizens can perceive and solve personal and public problems. This diversity also enriches a society by providing all citizens with more opportunities to experience other cultures and thus to become more fulfilled as human beings. When individuals are able to participate in a variety of ethnic cultures they are more able to benefit from the total human experience.

Individuals who know the world only from their own cultural and ethnic perspectives are denied important parts of the human experience and are culturally and ethnically encapsulated.

These individuals are also unable to know their own cultures fully because of their ethnic blinders. We can get a full view of our own backgrounds and behaviors only by viewing them from the perspectives of other racial and ethnic cultures. Just as a fish is unable to appreciate the uniqueness of his aquatic environment, so are many Anglo-American children unable to fully see and appreciate the uniqueness of their cultural characteristics. A key goal of multiethnic education is to help individuals gain greater self-understanding by viewing themselves from the perspectives of other cultures.

Anglo-Americans in the Northwest are often surprised and ir-

ritated when they learn that many sophisticated people in other ethnic groups, especially in the South, not only prefer their beef well done but are aghast at the thought of eating it rare. Multiethnic education neither seeks to make Northeastern Anglo-Americans eat their beef well done nor to make black Southerners eat theirs rare. However, it does attempt to acquaint each of these ethnic groups with the other group's ethnic culture. It also tries to help ethnic group members see that other cultures are just as meaningful and valid as their own. Multiethnic education assumes that, with acquaintance and understanding, respect may follow.

Another major goal of multiethnic education is to provide students with cultural and ethnic alternatives. Historically, the school curriculum has focused primarily on the culture of the Anglo-American child. The school was (and often is) primarily an extension of the Anglo-American child's home and community culture and did not (does not) present him* with cultural and ethnic alternatives.

The Anglo-centric curriculum, which still exists to varying degrees in most of the nation's schools, has harmful consequences for both Anglo-American children and ethnic minorities such as Afro-Americans and Mexican Americans. By teaching the Anglo-American child only about his own culture, the school is denying him the richness of the music, literature, values, life-styles, and perspectives of ethnic groups such as blacks, Puerto Rican Americans, and Polish Americans. Anglo-American children should know that black literature is uniquely enriching, and that groups such as Italian Americans and Mexican Americans have values which they may freely embrace.

The Anglo-centric curriculum negatively affects the ethnic child of color because he may find the school culture alien, hostile, and self-defeating. Because of the negative ways in which ethnic minority students and their cultures are often viewed by educators, many of them do not attain the skills which they need to function successfully in a nonacademic community.

A major goal of multiethnic education is to provide all students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge they need to function within their ethnic culture, the mainstream culture, and within and

*For clarity and economy, we use the masculine form of pronouns throughout this publication when no specific gender is implied. While we recognize the trend away from this practice, we see no graceful alternative. We hope the reader will impute no sexist motives; certainly none are intended.—*The Editors*

across other ethnic cultures. The Anglo-American child should be familiar with black English; the Afro-American child should be able to speak and write standard English and to function successfully within Anglo-American institutions.

Another major goal is to reduce the pain and discrimination which members of some ethnic and racial groups experience because of their unique racial, physical, and cultural characteristics. Filipino Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, and Chinese Americans often deny their ethnic identity, ethnic heritage, and family in order to assimilate and to participate more fully in American institutions. Jewish Americans, Polish Americans, and Italian Americans also frequently reject parts of their ethnic cultures when trying to succeed in school and in society. As Mildred Dickeman has insightfully pointed out, schools often force members of these groups to experience "self-alienation" in order to succeed. This is a high price to pay for educational, social, and economic mobility.

Some blacks become very Anglo-Saxon in their ways of viewing the world and in their values and behavior. They become so Anglicized that we might call them "Afro-Saxons." However, such individuals may still be denied jobs or the opportunities to buy homes in all-white neighborhoods because of their skin color. They may also become alienated from their own ethnic communities and families in their attempts to act and be like white Anglo-Americans. These individuals may thus become alienated from both their ethnic cultures and the mainstream Anglo culture. Social scientists call such individuals "marginal" persons.

Jewish Americans and Italian Americans may also experience "marginality" when they attempt to deny their ethnic heritages and to become Anglo-Americans. Although they can usually succeed in looking and in acting like Anglo-Americans, they are likely to experience psychological stress and identity conflict when they deny and reject family and their ethnic languages, symbols, behavior, and beliefs. Ethnicity plays a major role in the socialization of ethnic group members; ethnic characteristics are a part of basic identity. When a person denies his ethnic culture he rejects an important part of self.

Marginal ethnic group members are likely to be alienated citizens who feel that they have no stake in society. Those who reject

their basic group identity are incapable of becoming fully functioning and self-actualized persons and are more likely to experience political and social alienation. It is in the best interests of a political democracy to protect the rights of all citizens to maintain allegiances to their ethnic groups. Research has demonstrated that individuals are capable of maintaining allegiance both to their ethnic group and to the nation state.

Still another goal of multiethnic education is to help students to master essential reading, writing, and computational skills. Multiethnic education assumes that multiethnic content can help students to master important skills in these areas. Multiethnic readings and data can be highly motivating and meaningful. Students are more likely to master skills when the teacher uses content which deals with significant human problems, such as ethnicity within our society. All American children live in a society where ethnic problems are real and salient. Content related to ethnicity in American society and to the ethnic communities in which many students live is significant and meaningful to students, especially to those who are socialized within ethnic communities. Advocates of multiethnic education believe that skill goals are extremely important.

The Melting Pot

The Melting Pot, a play written by the English Jewish author Israel Zangwill, opened in New York City in 1908. The great ambition of the play's composer-protagonist, David Quixano, was to create an American symphony that would express his deep conviction that his adopted land was a nation in which all ethnic differences would combine to form a new people, superior to all. Because it embodied an idea that was pervasive in the United States at that time, the play was a huge success.

Contrary to Don Quixano's dream, what in fact happened was that most of the immigrant and ethnic cultures stuck to the bottom of the proverbial melting pot. Anglo-American culture remained dominant. Other ethnic groups had to give up their ethnic traits. Rather than a melting pot, the United States had Anglo-conformity.

The American school, like other American institutions, embraced Anglo-conformity goals. One of its major goals was to rid ethnic groups of their ethnic traits and to force them to acquire Anglo-American values and behavior. Ellwood P. Cubberley, the famed

educational leader, clearly stated the school's goal near the turn of the century:

> Everywhere these people [immigrants] tend to settle in groups or settlements and to set up their own national manners, customs, and observances. Our task is to *break up* their groups and settlements, to assimilate or amalgamate these people as part of the American race, and to implant in their children, as far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law, order, and popular government, and to awaken in them reverence for our democratic institutions and for those things which we as a people hold to be of abiding worth.

The Salad Bowl: Cultural Pluralism

Philosophers and writers at the turn of the century, such as Horace Kallen, Randolph Bourne, and Julius Drachsler, strongly defended the rights of immigrants then entering the United States. They rejected the assimilationist argument made by leaders like Cubberley, arguing that a political democracy must also be a cultural democracy and that the thousands of Southern, Eastern, and Central European immigrants had a right to maintain their ethnic cultures and institutions in American society. They used a "salad bowl" argument, maintaining that each ethnic culture would play a unique role in America and would contribute to and enrich the total society. This position was called "cultural pluralism," and its advocates asserted that it should be used to guide public and educational policies.

The arguments of the cultural pluralists were a cry in the wilderness. America's political, business, and educational leaders continued to push for the assimilation of the immigrant and indigenous racial and ethnic groups. They felt that only in this way could they make a unified nation out of so many different ethnic groups with histories of wars and hostilities in Europe. The triumph of assimilationist forces in American life was symbolized by the Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924.

Designed to halt the immigration of Southern, Central, and Eastern European groups, such as Poles, Greeks, and Italians, the Immigration Act of 1917 required immigrants to pass a reading test to enter the United States. When this act failed to substantially reduce the number of immigrants from these nations, the nativist groups successfully pushed for a second act, which drastically limited the number of immigrants who could enter the United States from all na-

tions except Western Europe. This act of 1924 ended the era of massive immigration to the United States and closed a significant chapter in American history.

The New Pluralism

Assimilationist forces and policies dominated American life from about the turn of the century to the beginning of the 1960s. Assimilationist ideas were almost totally unchallenged during this long period. Most minority-group leaders, as well as most dominant-group leaders, saw the assimilation of America's ethnic groups as the proper societal goal. True, there were a few stray voices who talked about separatism and ethnic cultures, such as Marcus Garvey in the 1920s. However, these lone advocates were successfully ignored or silenced.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the combined forces of rising expectations and discrimination in employment, housing, and education caused Afro-Americans to lead an unprecedented fight for their rights which became known as the Black Revolt.

The assimilationist policy shaped a nation from millions of immigrants and from diverse Native American groups and prevented the United States from becoming an ethnically balkanized nation. The assimilationist idea also worked reasonably well for ethnic peoples who were white. However, it did force many of them to become "marginal" and to reject family and heritage. Denying one's basic group identity is a painful and psychologically unsettling process. Despite this, most members of white ethnic groups have been able, in time, to assimilate sufficiently to climb the economic and social ladders.

The assimilationist idea has not worked nearly as well for ethnic peoples of color. This is what blacks realized by the early 1960s. The unfulfilled promises and dreams of the assimilationist idea was a major cause of the black civil rights movement of the 1960s. Many blacks who had become highly assimilated Afro-Saxons were still unable to participate fully in many American institutions. Blacks were still denied many opportunities because of their skin color. They searched for a new ideal. Many endorsed some form of "cultural pluralism," and the idea born at the turn of the century was refashioned to fit the hopes, aspirations, and dreams of disillusioned ethnic peoples in the 1960s.

Blacks demanded more control over the institutions in their communities and fuller representation of their ethnic cultures in all institutions, including the schools. They demanded more black teachers and administrators for their youths, textbooks which reflected black culture, and cafeteria foods more like those which their children ate at home.

Educational institutions at all levels began to respond, and the apparent success of the Black Revolt caused other alienated ethnic groups of color, such as Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, and Puerto Rican Americans, to make similar demands for political, economic, and educational equality.

Mexican American and Asian American studies courses emerged paralleling black studies. The reform movements initiated by the ethnic peoples of color caused many white ethnic groups that had denied their ethnic cultures in the past to proclaim ethnic pride and to push for the inclusion of more information about white ethnic groups in the curriculum. This movement became known as the "new pluralism." Judith Herman writes,

> [It] has been described as reactive, as "me too," and essentially opportunistic and false. For some, it may have been. But for many, especially the new generation of ethnic leaders, it was a real response. It was in part a sense that the requirement for success in America seemed to be an estrangement from family and history; that for all its rhetoric about pluralism, America didn't mean for ethnicity to go beyond the boundaries of food, a few statues or parades honoring heroes, of colorful costumes and dances.

In a sense, the black civil rights movement legitimized ethnicity and other alienated ethnic groups began to search for their ethnic roots and to demand more group and human rights.

Multiethnic Education: Practices and Problems

The ethnic movements of the 1960s and 1970s have stimulated needed reform in educational institutions at all levels, from kindergarten through university. However, some unfortunate practices, ideas, and assumptions also resulted from these movements, some of which still negatively affect school programs. These ideas and practices will be analyzed and salient characteristics of the idealized multiethnic school will be described.

Programs to Silence Protest

Many school districts, more anxious to silence "militant" ethnic students and teachers than to reform the curriculum, structured hurriedly and poorly conceptualized ethnic studies programs and hired anyone with a visible claim to ethnic group membership to teach them. Consequently, these programs were often badly taught and highly politicized. They often emphasized how ethnic peoples of color had been victimized by institutional racism.

The courses usually focused on only one ethnic group. Thus black studies units and courses were usually taught in predominantly black schools, Puerto Rican studies courses and units in predominantly Puerto Rican American schools. The assumption was that in the United States only black Americans needed to study about blacks and that only Puerto Rican Americans needed to study about Puerto Ricans. While both the politicized nature and monoethnic character of ethnic studies programs have waned tremendously in recent years, monoethnic programs and practices still haunt the multiethnic education movement. School districts often point to their Asian American studies or black studies courses to explain why they have not attempted to reform the general course of study. Since these courses are usually electives taken by only a small percentage of the

school population, district personnel tend to think that there is not a great need for them. While specialized ethnic studies courses can and often do, in fact, serve essential needs of students, for true multiethnic education the total curriculum should be changed to reflect ethnic diversity.

Children Learn What They Live

Teachers often assume that children are unaware of racial differences, and that they will merely "create" problems by making the study of ethnicity an integral part of the curriculum. This idea is widespread among teachers, probably because they are not acquainted with the research on the racial attitudes of children and have not carefully observed children in interracial settings and situations.

Over the years, research has consistently shown that very young children, even before they enter kindergarten, are aware of racial differences and very soon internalize the evaluations of different races that are widespread within their culture. Studies by Kenneth B. and Mamie Clark, Mary Ellen Goodman, and J. Kenneth Morland have shown that very young children are aware of racial differences.

Long before they enter school, children learn about race from their parents, television, cartoons, and movies. All of these experiences, which Carlos E. Cortés calls the "societal curriculum," teach children ideas and attitudes toward ethnic and racial groups. Unfortunately, many of the ideas and attitudes that children learn from the wider society are negative, stereotypic, and damaging to children themselves and to the victimized groups. Research by Morland, for example, indicates that both black and white nursery school children tend to prefer white to black playmates. Recent research by Charles Y. Glock and his associates indicates that by adolescence ethnic and racial bias is widespread. They write, "Prejudice is rampant in school populations . . . not only racial prejudice but anti-Semitism and a virulent but especially neglected class prejudice as well." Other research has highlighted the negative images of different ethnic and racial groups that children learn from television and the mass media.

Thus, contrary to what many teachers believe, children are keenly aware of racial differences and have developed discriminatory attitudes toward racial and ethnic groups by the time they enter school. It is true, however, that the racial attitudes of a 5-year-old are

not as well crystallized as those of a teen-ager. This suggests that if the curriculum is going to have any significant impact on the racial and ethnic attitudes of children, it should be multiethnic, beginning in the early or preschool years.

We Treat Them All the Same

Many teachers say that they do not get involved in problems related to race and ethnicity because they don't see the colors and racial characteristics of their students. Such teachers claim that they "treat them all the same, whether they are black, brown, blue, or red." Teachers who make this claim usually have the best intentions, see themselves as good teachers, and want to treat all of their students fairly. However, in their attempts to deny the ethnic and racial characteristics of their students (which I feel cannot be successful), they may be failing to respond to the unique needs of many of their ethnic minority students. Many students who belong to ethnic minority groups have no problems which result from their ethnicity. However, some do have special needs, and the teacher must respond carefully and sensitively to the needs of each child.

The Mexican American student who comes to school speaking primarily Spanish does not need a teacher who will treat him exactly like all of the Anglo students who are fluent in English. Rather, he needs a teacher who recognizes, respects, and appreciates his cultural differences and who has the attitudes, skills, and abilities to respond to them in a positive and helpful way. The black or Jewish American child who is experiencing an ethnic identity problem will be helped more by a teacher who can recognize the problem than by a teacher who "treats everyone the same." A teacher who dispenses identical treatment to students who have very different and unique needs is denying them an equal chance to succeed.

A black child who was attending a predominantly white school that had a white principal was experiencing acute racial identity problems. He was also having difficulty adjusting to the hostile racial climate of the school. One day the child's pain overcame him and he ran out of his classroom and down the hall. The principal stopped him and asked, "Robert L., what's the matter?" The child cried out in anguish, "I'm black, I'm black!" The principal responded, "You know, I had never noticed." The principal had very benign intentions and was trying to make the child feel more comfortable in the

school. However, his response in effect bespoke the root of the child's problem and denied his very identity.

Us and Them

Many teachers say they would like to teach about ethnicity and race but have no blacks or other ethnic minority students in their classes. These well-intentioned teachers, too, have some misconceptions about the nature of ethnicity and about the goals of multiethnic education. They assume that ethnic studies is the study of "them," meaning ethnic people of color, and that American studies is the study of "us," meaning Anglo-Americans.

Ethnicity is a broad concept which is often misunderstood by educators. Social scientists define an ethnic group as a group with a unique culture, heritage, and tradition, and some unique value orientations, beliefs, and behavior. An ethnic group is also a political and economic interest group. This broad definition suggests that all Americans are members of one ethnic group or another, including Anglo-Americans, Irish Americans, and German Americans. However, many white ethnic group individuals who have experienced total assimilation have become ethnically Anglo-Americans. People vary greatly in the degree to which they identify with their ethnic groups. Some Afro-Americans and Mexican Americans are highly assimilated and have almost no identification with their ethnic group; other members of these groups, in all social classses, identify strongly with them. The same is true for white ethnic group members.

When a broad definition of an ethnic group is used to conceptualize and design school programs related to ethnicity, ethnic studies involve the study of both "us" and "them," not just the study of ethnic people of color or ethnic minority groups. A major goal of ethnic studies, conceptualized in this way, is to help the individual to better understand himself by looking at his culture and behavior through the perspectives of another culture. Clyde Kluckhohn, the eminent American anthropologist, wrote that "[cultural studies] hold up a great mirror to man and let him look at himself in his infinite variety." Better self-understanding is one of the key goals of multiethnic education. In a sound multiethnic curriculum, the teacher helps each child to see that he is a member of many different groups and that the ethnic group is one of the many groups to which he belongs.

One's attachment to and identity with these various groups varies with the individual, the time in one's life, and the situations and settings in which one finds oneself. Because of their visible physical traits, some ethnic group members are forced by the larger society to identify with their ethnic groups. These individuals—many blacks and Chinese Americans, for example—often have a strong identity with their ethnic group, in large part because their physical traits do not permit them any choice. However, a black person's identity with his ethnic group may vary with region, social class, or educational level. Other individuals, such as many Norwegian Americans, have little or no identity with their ethnic group, in large part because they usually have the option of whether to identify with it. Other groups, such as religious, social class, or occupational groups, are much more important to some individuals than is their ethnic group. The converse is also true.

A teacher must look at each individual in his class and determine which identifying groups are the most important for each student. This determination should help him decide on his teaching strategy. Ethnicity will be very important for some students, of little or no importance to others. The teacher cannot assume that just because a student is black or Chicano, he is necessarily interested in or strongly identified with the ethnic group to which he belongs. Ethnic identification should not be forced on people; to do so would probably do more harm than good. Nor should ethnicity be artificial or romanticized. Many students, especially many white students, are culturally Anglo-Americans, even though their ancestors may have come from Southern or Central Europe. The teacher should be careful not to force these students to "find" their ethnic roots.

Forcing students to identify ethnically can be psychologically unsettling and embarrassing. In one classroom, a teacher told the children to group themselves by their ethnic groups to complete an assignment. After the groups had been formed, Susie was sitting alone at her desk. The teacher said, "Susie, why aren't you in a group? Where is your group?" Susie answered in tears, "I don't have a group, Miss Bandini!" Miss Bandini certainly did not mean to shame or hurt Susie, but she had done so despite her benign intentions and concern for teaching about ethnicity.

Heroes and Holidays

Many teachers see ethnic studies as essentially additive to the

major curriculum thrust. They believe that multiethnic education consists primarily of adding ethnic minority heroes to the list of Anglo-American heroes that are already taught. Thus Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez are studied along with George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

There are several problems with the hero approach to teaching about race and ethnicity. It tends to emphasize the experiences of selected heroes, many of whom are of questionable historical significance, rather than the total experiences and problems of ethnic groups, viewed from a comparative, conceptual, and interdisciplinary perspective. Often children learn little about the experiences of an ethnic group when they study only its heroes.

The hero approach to teaching about ethnicity too often emphasizes the memory of isolated facts and does not help children develop higher-level thinking skills or learn how to resolve value-related personal and social problems. The curriculum should help students master higher-level concepts and generalizations and to resolve social issues rationally. Isolated facts about Crispus Attucks, for example, don't help students develop inquiry skills and abilities any more than isolated facts about Abraham Lincoln or George Washington. The hero approach to ethnic studies is clearly insufficient.

Changing the curriculum to reflect the ethnic diversity within American society provides a tremendous opportunity to implement much-needed radical curriculum reforms, such as conceptual teaching, interdisciplinary approaches to the study of social issues, value inquiry, and the provision of opportunities for students to participate and become involved in social action. Multiethnic education can serve as a vehicle for general and radical curriculum reform. This is probably its greatest promise. It is a process as well as a reform movement that will result in a new type of schooling which presents novel views of the American experience and helps students acquire the knowledge, skills, and commitments needed to make our nation more responsive to the total human condition.

Tepees and Chitlins

Some teachers view multiethnic education primarily as the study of the strange and exotic customs and behavior of ethnic groups and as the celebration of ethnic holidays and birthdays. Teachers who take this view often have students build tepees and igloos and

prepare and eat ethnic foods such as chitlins, enchiladas, and chow mein. We might think of this as the "chitlin and tepee" approach to multiethnic education.

In many schools, most of what is taught about ethnic groups is in the form of specialized days and celebrations. Some schools have Black Week, Indian Day, and Chicano Afternoon. On these days students prepare ethnic foods, build tepees, venerate ethnic heroes, sing ethnic songs, and perform ethnic dances. Ethnic community people might also be invited to the school to give talks that "tell it like it is."

This approach to multiethnic education is problematical for several reasons. If they neglect them the rest of the year and focus on the experiences of ethnic groups only on special days and holidays, teachers are likely to reinforce the notion that ethnic groups are not integral parts of American society and culture. Students may conclude that black history and American history are separate things. Rather than being isolated on special days, black history as well as Chicano and Jewish history, for example, ought to be integral parts of the daily instructional program. Thus every day in the classroom ought to be Black Day, Chicano Day, and Jewish American Day. I am not suggesting that ethnic holidays should not be celebrated in the school. Content about ethnic groups should be highlighted on special days and in addition should become an integral part of the daily curriculum. In this way the celebration of ethnic holidays becomes an important part of a total school program in multiethnic education.

Focusing on the strange and exotic traits and characteristics of ethnic groups is likely to reinforce stereotypes and misconceptions. The making of tepees does not reveal anything significant about contemporary American Indian values, cultures, or experiences. It merely adds to the classical Indian stereotype, which is so pervasive on television and in the wider society. Rather than focus on the exotic characteristics of ethnic groups, the teacher should emphasize the common needs which all human groups share, such as the need to explain the unknown and the need for artistic expression, and the diverse ways in which American ethnic groups have solved the problems of survival.

By studying the basic human needs of all people, students are more likely to develop a sophisticated appreciation for the human

bonds they share with other people and the ways in which they differ. This type of learning is likely to make students less ethnically encapsulated and intolerant.

Multiethnic Education: Nature and Promises

Many educators, when they think of multiethnic education, think of the school's formalized course of study. Black studies and Chicano studies courses immediately come to mind. But ethnic studies, as part of the formalized course of study, are only one aspect of multiethnic education.

Multiethnic education is designed for *all* students—all races, ethnic groups, and social classes. Certainly it should not be limited to schools which have racially and ethnically mixed populations. A major assumption made by advocates of multiethnic education is that it is needed as much by the Anglo-American middle-class suburban child as it is by the Mexican American child who lives in the barrio.

Multiethnic education reaches far beyond the social studies. *It is concerned with modifying the total educational environment, so that the environment is more reflective of the ethnic diversity of American society.* This means not only that different ethnic cultures and experiences should be studied. It also means that institutional changes must be made within the school so that students from diverse ethnic groups will have equal educational opportunities. It means that the school will promote and encourage the concept of ethnic diversity.

Since multiethnic education is a very broad concept implying total school reform, educators who want their schools to become multiethnic must examine the school environment to determine the extent to which it is monoethnic and Anglo-centric, and take appropriate steps to create and sustain a multiethnic educational environment. The ethnic and racial composition of the school staff, its attitudes, the formalized and hidden curricula, the teaching strategies and materials, the testing and counseling program, and the school's norms are some of the elements which must reflect ethnic diversity within the multiethnic school. These and other variables of the school environment which must be reformed in order to make the school multiethnic are illustrated in Figure 1.

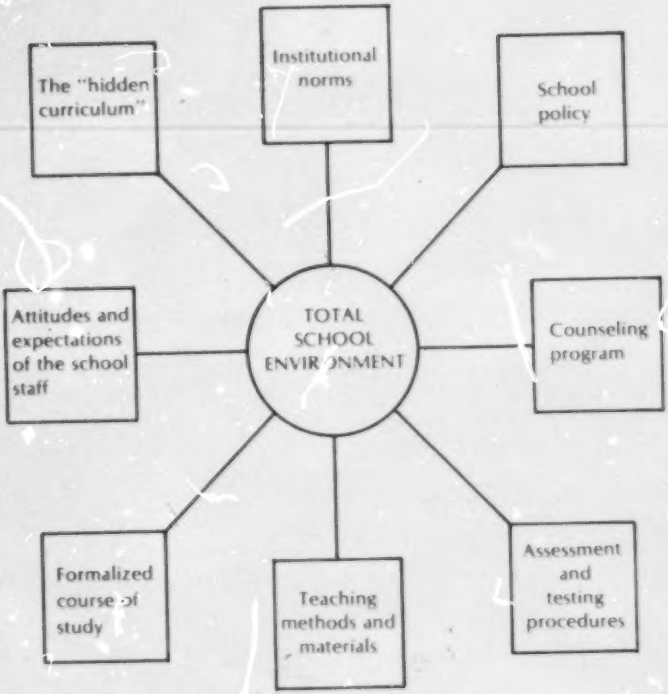

FIGURE 1
The Total School Environment

In this figure the total school environment is conceptualized as a system which consists of a number of major identifiable factors, such as school policy, the institutional norms, and the formalized curriculum or course of study. In the ideal multiethnic school each of these factors reflects ethnic pluralism. While any one of these factors may be the focus of initial school reform, changes must take place in each of them to create and sustain an effective multiethnic educational environment.

The reform must be systemwide. While any one of the factors in Figure 1 may be the initial focus for reform, changes must take place in all of the major school variables in order for multiethnic education to be successfully implemented. We learned from the ethnic studies movements of the 1960s that few substantial changes take place when you give teachers multiethnic materials but do not train them in how to use them or help them to acquire new conceptual frameworks for viewing American culture and society.

The total school environment must be the unit of change, and not any one element, such as materials, teaching strategies, the testing program, or teacher training. Yet teacher training, preservice and inservice, is very important. Many teachers attain new insights, materials, and multiethnic teaching strategies during summer workshops. They are eager to try them in their schools. However, they become very discouraged when they return to their schools in the fall where traditional norms toward ethnic diversity often exist and where they frequently get no support from their administrators or peers. Without such support, teachers with new skills and insights give up and revert back to their old behaviors and attitudes.

The next section of this fastback will discuss characteristics of the ideal multiethnic school. Goals which all schools can strive to achieve will be presented, and the reforms needed to make a school multiethnic will be highlighted.

Characteristics of the Multiethnic School

A Philosophy of Ethnic Pluralism

Historically, the American school has accepted the "melting pot" idea. It has rejected and ridiculed the culture of the ethnic child and has forced him to accept Anglo-American values, beliefs, and behaviors.

The multiethnic school rejects the melting pot idea and recognizes and accepts the child's ethnic culture. Its philosophy of ethnic pluralism recognizes that ethnicity is a vital factor in many students' lives. It also recognizes that the ethnic minority child as well as the Anglo-American child must learn to function effectively in both his culture and in the mainstream culture. The school, according to this position, should help all students develop the skills, attitudes, and abilities which they need to do this, while also helping them learn how to function successfully within and across different ethnic cultures.

A Multiethnic School Staff

The multiethnic school has a racially and ethnically mixed school staff which respects and values ethnic diversity. Students learn important lessons about ethnicity by observing the adults in the school environment. When all of the significant adults in a particular school, such as teachers, principals, and counselors, are white, something about the school's attitude toward racial and ethnic diversity is communicated to the students. Lengthy didactic lessons about the need for an ethnically diverse society are not likely to have much impact on students in a school which has a monoethnic professional and supportive staff and institutional norms which reflect the melting pot.

The school staff of a multiethnic school has positive attitudes

toward ethnic youths and high academic expectations for them. Teacher attitudes and expectations have a profound impact on students' perceptions, academic behavior, self-concepts, and beliefs. Studies by Ray Rist, Thomas P. Carter, and Geneva Gay indicate that teachers typically have negative attitudes and low academic expectations for their black, Mexican American, and Indian students. Other research suggests that teachers, next to parents, are the most "significant others" in children's lives, and that teachers play an important role in the formation of children's racial attitudes and beliefs.

Theodore W. Parsons found that the teachers in a school he studied in a Mexican American community had many stereotypes about Mexican American children. He felt that the schools reinforced the negative images of the Mexican American that were widespread in the community and helped to maintain their lower-class status. He quotes one teacher who explains why she put an Anglo boy in charge of a small group of Mexican American pupils:

> I think Johnny needs to learn how to set a good example and how to lead others. His father owns one of the big farms in the area and Johnny has to learn how to lead the Mexicans. One day he will be helping his father and he will have to know how to handle Mexicans. I try to help whenever I can.

An extensive review of the research suggests that changing the racial attitudes of adults is a cumbersome but necessary task. Courses with general or global objectives are not likely to be successful in changing racial attitudes. Courses which consist primarily or exclusively of lecture presentations have little effect. Diverse experiences, such as seminars, visits, community involvement, committee work, guest speakers, films, multiethnic materials, and workshops, combined with factual lectures, are more effective than any single approach. Community involvement can be a powerful technique.

Some behavior-oriented research suggests that changing a teacher's *behavior* is far more important than changing his personal attitudes. Behavior is highly influenced by the norms within an institution or setting. Thus the prejudiced individual will tend to act in a nonprejudicial way if there are powerful norms and sanctions against acting prejudiced within a particular institution. Behaviorist

theory suggests that we should concentrate less on trying to change the personal attitudes of the school staff and spend more time trying to change the institutional norms of the school. These norms should make it nonreinforcing for the school staff to act negatively toward ethnic students.

A strong policy which reinforces ethnic diversity, supported and implemented by the key administrators in the district, will go a long way toward changing the institutional norms within a school district. The district might start by issuing a policy statement on ethnic pluralism. Several model statements, issued by professional organizations, exist. They are "No One Model American: A Statement on Multicultural Education," issued by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and the more comprehensive statement issued by the National Council for the Social Studies, *Curriculum Guidelines for Multiethnic Education*. A school district interested in issuing a policy statement could adapt one of these statements or, using them as models, develop its own statement. The Minneapolis Public Schools has issued one and the Michigan State Department of Education is preparing a policy statement on multicultural education.

Multiethnic Perspectives

The curriculum in the multiethnic school helps students view American society and history from diverse ethnic perspectives rather than primarily or exclusively from the viewpoints of Anglo-American historians and writers. Most school courses are currently taught primarily from Anglo-American perspectives. These courses and experiences are based on what I call the *Anglo-American-centric Model*, or Model A (see Figure 2). Many school districts have attempted to reform their curriculum to reflect ethnic diversity by moving from a Model A curriculum to a curriculum based on Model B, the *Ethnic Additive Model*. In courses and experiences based on Model B, ethnic content is an additive to the major curriculum thrust, which remains Anglo-American dominated. Asian American studies courses, Puerto Rican American studies courses, and special units on ethnic groups in the elementary grades are examples of Model B types of curricular experiences.

In the multiethnic school, the curriculum reflects Model C, the *Multiethnic Model*. In courses and experiences based on Model C,

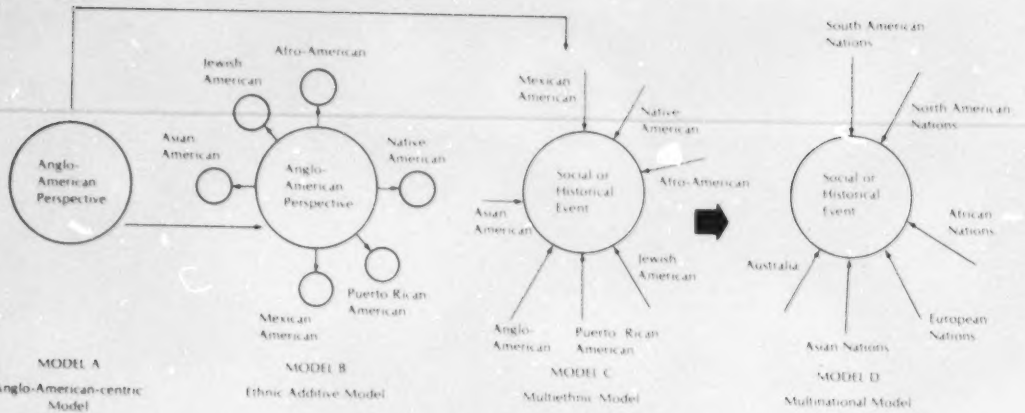

FIGURE 2
Ethnic Studies as a Process of Curriculum Change

Ethnic studies is conceptualized as a process of curriculum reform which can lead from a total Anglo-American perspective on our history and culture (Model A), to multiethnic perspectives as additives to the major curriculum thrust (Model B), to a completely multiethnic curriculum in which every historical and social event is viewed from the perspectives of different ethnic groups (Model C). In Model C the Anglo-American perspective is only one of several and is in no way superior or inferior to other ethnic perspectives. Model D, which is multinational, is the ultimate curriculum goal. In this curriculum model students study historical and social events from multinational perspectives. Many schools that have attempted ethnic modification of the curriculum have implemented Model B types of programs. It is suggested here that curriculum reform move directly from Model A to Model C and ultimately to Model D. However, in those districts which have Model B types of programs, it is suggested that they move from Model B to Model C and eventually to Model D types of curricular organization.

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the students study events and situations from several ethnic points of view. Anglo-American perspectives are only one group of several and are in no way superior or inferior to other perspectives.

I view Model D (the *Multinational Model*) as the ultimate goal of curriculum reform. In this model students study events and situations from multiethnic and multinational perspectives. Since we live in a global society, students need to learn how to become effective citizens of the world community. This is unlikely to happen if they study historical and contemporary events primarily from the perspectives of ethnic cultures within their own nation.

In studying a historical period, such as the colonial period in American history, in a course organized on the Multiethnic Model (Model C), inquiry would not end when the students viewed the 13 English colonies in North America from the perspectives of Anglo-American historians, as is usually the case. Conceptualizing the colonial period as only the study of the English colonies is limiting and Anglo-centric.

Long before the English colonists were successful in settling Jamestown, the Spaniards had established colonies in Florida and New Mexico. Also, the French established colonies in Louisiana during the colonial period. When the Spanish and the French colonies are studied in addition to the English colonies, the students are able to see that the region which eventually became the United States was highly multiethnic during this period. Many different European nationalities were in North America during the colonial period, and there were many different groups of Indians as well as blacks. To gain a full understanding of the colonial period, students must view it from the perspectives of the English, Spanish, and French colonists, as well as from the points of view of the many different groups of Indians and blacks. The era of colonization had very different meanings for the Pueblo Indians and the Spanish colonists. It also had different meanings for the black slaves, the free blacks, and for the English settlers. These diverse perspectives should be studied within a sound multiethnic curriculum.

I do not suggest that we eliminate or denigrate Anglo-American perspectives on American society, but they should be among many different ethnic viewpoints taught in the schools. Only with such teaching will students gain a global rather than an ethnocentric view of our nation's history and culture.

An Interdisciplinary-Conceptual Curriculum

Content related to ethnic diversity should permeate the entire curriculum and should not be limited to the social studies, the humanities, or the language arts. Ethnic content is just as appropriate for such areas as home economics, physical education, science, mathematics, and art. Although it may be especially challenging for the science or math teacher to infuse the curriculum with ethnic content, this content should be incorporated into all subject areas. Students should be able to see how ethnic groups have influenced and contributed to American society in all walks of life and how each subject area can help us to better understand the experiences of ethnic groups and consequently ourselves.

A conceptual approach will facilitate the implementation of a multiethnic curriculum which cuts across disciplinary boundaries. In this approach the curriculum is organized around key concepts such as culture, socialization, power, and scarcity. Whenever possible, these concepts are viewed from the perspectives of disciplines such as the social sciences, art, music, literature, physical education, communication, the natural sciences, and mathematics.

Let's look at an example using the concept of culture. In literature students can read novels such as *Farewell to Manzanar, House Made of Dawn,* and *Bless Me Ultima.* They can determine what these novels reveal or do not reveal about the cultures of Japanese Americans, American Indians, and Mexican Americans. In drama students can produce a play based on the epic poem *I Am Joaquin* and discuss its treatment of Chicano history, contemporary life, and culture. They can examine the works of ethnic minority artists such as Jacob Lawrence, Charles White, and Roberto Lebron. The language arts can focus on the various ways in which symbols and communication styles differ between and within ethnic groups and how standard American English is influenced by the ethnic cultures within the United States.

In science students can examine the physical characteristics of the various ethnic groups and try to determine ways in which the physical traits of ethnic groups influence the way other groups respond to them, their interactions with each other, and their total culture. In mathematics students can study the cultural roots of our base 10 number system and discuss ways in which the number system within a society reflects its culture. They can also research the

contributions that various ethnic groups have made to our number system.

Many excellent opportunities exist for teaching concepts from an interdisciplinary perspective. These opportunities should be fully explored and used. However, interdisciplinary teaching requires the strong cooperation of teachers in the various content areas. Team teaching will often be necessary, especially at the high school level, to organize and implement interdisciplinary units and lessons.

Linguistic Characteristics of Ethnic Students

Because of the communities in which they grow up, many children come to school with values, beliefs, and behavioral characteristics which differ from those of other children and from those expected in the school. Language is one of these characteristics. Many Mexican American students speak only Spanish when they enter school. Other ethnics, including many Filipino Americans, Chinese Americans, Italian Americans, and some groups of American Indians, also come to school speaking a language other than English. Some black children speak a dialect of English which some linguists, such as Roger Shuy and William Labov, call "black English." According to these linguists, black English is a valid communication system, with rules and a logical system of its own. Thus there is a correct way to speak black English.

In the past, and frequently today, schools responded to the unique languages of ethnic children by rejecting them and trying to *replace* them with standard English. In many schools of the Southwest, the "no Spanish" rule existed until recently. Mexican American students were not allowed to speak Spanish in the school. If they did they were punished, sometimes severely. There is evidence that the "no Spanish" rule still exists in some schools today.

In the multiethnic school the professional staff has positive attitudes toward the linguistic patterns of ethnic students. Their languages are viewed as valid communication systems, needed to survive in their families and communities. No attempt is made to replace their languages with standard English. Rather, teachers introduce the students to the concept of *alternative* languages and dialects. They are taught that some languages are appropriate in some social situations and settings and inappropriate in others. The minority student who speaks barrio Spanish or black English is helped to master standard English. However, it is presented to him as

an alternative rather than as a replacement way of speaking and writing.

Many advocates of multiethnic education believe that all children in school should learn to speak a second language, such as Spanish. Students in the multiethnic school become acquainted with the languages and dialects of minority groups and view them as valid communication systems. They also learn how these languages and dialects have influenced standard English and how they have been influenced by standard English. The assumption is made that students from diverse ethnic and cultural groups should understand and appreciate other languages and dialects.

Students in the multiethnic school also learn that languages are always in the process of change and that a language system reflects the values and culture of a people. Thus, when you reject an individual's language or force him to reject it, you are rejecting an important part of that person and forcing him to reject part of himself. Students should also learn that the ways in which languages and dialects are viewed within a society reflect its power structure. The languages and dialects spoken by groups with power within a society tend to be positively viewed; those spoken by groups that exercise little power tend to be rejected and ridiculed.

Multiethnic Testing

In the multiethnic school testing and assessment procedures reflect the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the students. Many students who are socialized within ethnic minority cultures find school tests alien and intimidating. Consequently, they perform poorly and are placed in low academic tracks, special education classes, and low reading groups. Teachers in these situations tend to have low expectations for their students and often fail to create the kinds of learning environments which will enable them to master the skills and abilities needed to function successfully in society.

Standardized intelligence testing often serves to deny minority youths equal educational opportunities. The results of such tests are frequently used to justify the alleged noneducability of certain minority students and to relieve their teachers of accountability. Novel ways of assessing the abilities of minority youths, ways which will reflect the cultures in which they are socialized, need to be devised. However, it will do little good for us to create novel assessment procedures which reflect students' cultures unless, at the

same time, we implement multiethnic and multiracial curricula and teaching practices. Students who score well on an ethnically oriented intelligence test are not guaranteed to achieve well within an alien school culture which has a curriculum unrelated to their feelings, perceptions, and cultural experiences. Jane R. Mercer has identified some changes which multiethnic testing necessitates:

> . . . [A] multicultural perspective would recognize the integrity and value of different cultural traditions. It would not assume that the Anglo-American culture is necessarily superior to other traditions, or that Anglo-conformity is imperative for social cohesion. It would accept the fact that there are multiple cultural mainstreams in modern America and that individual citizens have the right to participate in as many of these mainstreams as they wish. Differences in life-styles, language, and values would be treated with respect, and persons from minority cultures would not be regarded as culturally disadvantaged, culturally deprived, or empty vessels.

A Final Note

Events of the last decade have dramatically indicated that we live in a world society beset with momentous social and human problems, many of which are related to ethnic hostility and conflict. Effective solutions to these critical problems can be found only by an active, compassionate, and ethnically sensitive citizenry capable of making sound public decisions that will benefit our ethnically diverse world community.

The current school curriculum is not preparing most of our youths to function within a world community of the future. Many of our students grow up in middle-class Anglo-American communities and attend all-white middle-class schools. Their world is very different from the world society in which they will be required to function in the future. The white race is a world minority. Five out of six persons in the world are nonwhite. The vast majority of the world's population is non-Christian. Because the birthrate of nonwhites greatly exceeds that of whites, white Christians will be an even smaller world minority by the year 2000. The school should present students from all racial, ethnic, and social class groups with cultural and ethnic alternatives, and teach them to live in a world society that is ethnically and racially diverse. Students must be helped to develop the vision and the commitment needed to make our world more humane.

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